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Spencer, Sherman, Oral history Interview

Doris Meyer

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FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES



Spencer, Sherman (1950-1984)
Circulation Librarian
University Library

January 22, 2014
By Doris Meyer

Transcribed by Shameela Maskeen and Amy Eastberg, University Archives

Subjects: Early years of library, building, staffing, departments; early administration and faculty retreats; Stockton College/College of Pacific transition; branch libraries: music, pharmacy.

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

MEYER: Hi Sherm-I'm Doris, and this is Sherman Spencer. My name is Doris Meyer. Sherman is to be interviewed today. It's January 22, and we're sitting here in the Library-in fact, it's the library that we're going to be talking about. So Sherman, thanks a million for agreeing to be interviewed, and we'll see how it goes.

SPENCER: I'm delighted to be here, and I think, unless Earl Washburn is still alive, I am the oldest member of the Emeriti Society.

MEYER: Well, there are several of us that are pretty close.

SPENCER: Pretty close. I looked through the dates, and it looked to me that Earl was the only one who would be under a hundred who could be here. I kind of think Earl died- I don't remember, but that makes me the oldest. I'll be 90 this coming year.

MEYER: Oh yes. Well, you're just about a year or two ahead.

SPENCER: Yes. I came here in '50, and I think you came later maybe?

MEYER: Yes, I came in '56.

SPENCER: Oh, '56, so 6 years then.

MEYER: So you were here...anyway, you've looked over the questions, and some of them are appropriate-and some of them aren't, so we'll just sort of move through and see what happens.

SPENCER: Well, my position on the staffing is probably different than most of the other people who were interviewed. In the first place, I was very young when I came. I came here the same year-same month-I graduated from Colombia in New York. I had a choice of several jobs, but in the Army, I met a young man who was a student here, and he was so enthusiastic with the place, so I thought it would be an interesting place to be. So I wrote here-this was the only place I wrote to asking about a position, and it just so happened that they were in need of-or were thinking of funding a position, and it worked out very well. I turned 26 the day before I got here. When I came, I was by far the youngest member of the faculty. I don't think there was anyone within 10 years of my age, so I was really kind of an outsider, age wise, with a sort of naïve sense for this was really the first real job I ever had, and it was an interesting thing because the library staff at the time was very small. There was a part time librarian, Alan Laursen, who split his time between UOP and Delta. He was librarian at both places, and the Delta one seemed to take up much, most of his time. We didn't see him until 3 or 4 in the afternoon, and so he was not very much there. There was a cataloguer, also named Spencer, who was, I would guess, in his late 60s. There was an order librarian, Monreo Potts, who had been with the school since 1918, and she was really the old fashioned librarian. She saved the string from packages for reuse.

MEYER: Before you go on any further, you've mentioned a couple of names. Could you say those names again, and Alan's name?

SPENCER: Yes. There was Alan Laursen-

MEYER: Repeat that spelling-

SPENCER: Laursen. He was a Dane. There was Monreo Potts and Robinson Spencer who spelled his last name the same as I. Then there was a Selena Harrison. She was late middle-aged. She was the reference librarian. That was the whole professional staff. They had several sub professional people. They had a reserve librarian; Edith Grider was the reserve librarian. Iva Colliver handled the circulation. She was the wife of George Colliver who was in the Religious Education Department. Then they had a couple of people working with the cataloguer, and the order librarian, who were full time, but weren't professional librarians, but they were each in charge of a particular thing.

MEYER: Let me ask you again about the two buildings. There was a library that was Delta College-

SPENCER: Well yes-and we had no connection with Delta, other than we shared a librarian. I think our students could use it, but they never did, so they were really very separate things. We were adjacent and shared some students; some of the faculty was shared too. A number of the faculty had joint appointments. They taught classes at both places, and my understanding was that students could take classes some way there, but I'm sure the Delta College people took classes here, they had free tuition.

MEYER: Right. So what you're talking about- you and your staff-were housed...

SPENCER: We were housed in what is now the Engineering building.

MEYER: On this campus?

SPENCER: Yes on this campus. We had reserve and music libraries over there, but the main one was in the Engineering building. It had once been the power plant of this school, then it was taken over by the library. It had two and half floors. The bottom floor was sort of below the ground. You looked out the window and saw ground level there, and that was where the book collection was. Then on the second floor, there was a large reading room, and that's where the reserves and periodicals were. Then at a certain elevation in the back was an attic-a storage attic, and also in the front, that was the librarians office and the catalog and order departments. The reference library was also on the second floor, and that's where the unbound periodicals were kept. The stacks were open, except the unbound new periodicals were at the reference desk and had to be asked for. Otherwise, the stacks both upstairs and downstairs were open.

MEYER: Yes. To make it clear to the reader or the listener of this, Delta College was just adjacent to the University, and so, are you saying the Engineering building-is the Engineering building on this campus?

SPENCER: Oh yes. It's one of the old, old buildings. I think I was 1924 or so when they moved here, shortly after. It had been the power plant. It's that brick building. Later it was taken over by the library, and after that, by the Engineering department, who are still there I believe. That's where they found that stained glass window that nobody can attribute to-

MEYER: Yes-

SPENCER: I had never seen it - I think I could tell them where it was, but nobody asked me. We were in there, that old building, until I think about '55 or '54. I don't know when this-what they called the Martin library, which was the basic structure here was built. I think it must have been about '54. I know we were in it by '56; it was interesting the way we moved the book collection-it was a student effort. We loaded the books in banana crates. Just took them off the shelf in order, put them in banana crates, and students formed a long line and carried them to the new library, we put them on the shelves. I think we accomplished it in one day, as I recall. It was on a Saturday, and it worked beautifully. We didn't have a problem, except for a couple of times they put the books backwards on the shelf; it was a very interesting effort, and we just moved seamlessly into what was then the Martin Library here. That library had the reference and the periodical collection and reading room on the first floor, and the book stacks were on the second floor with the large reading room and the reserve books. Then, when they built the addition on it, they added stacks into what was then the reading room on the second floor, and they had new reading rooms on the second floor, and then a third floor which was virtually all reading rooms.

MEYER: Yes. Originally, when you first came out, what was the title of your position?

SPENCER: I was Circulation Librarian. We had faculty status, but not equivalent rank. It was not assigned. We were professional in that we signed a one year contract when we came, and then never-we never signed another one. We had the same health insurance and the tenure and all, but it was, I think, in the '60's, maybe late '60's, that we finally were given equivalent faculty rank. That was mostly the effort of Libby Matson. I think we started out as...I think the librarian was a full professor. The rest of us were associates or assistants, I don't remember exactly. Then, eventually, we were promoted and eventually, we were mostly all professors when we retired. The only difference it made was that when the Academic Council was formed, for the first time, the library was actively involved in the governance. Up to that point, we were sort of outside everything. We went to faculty meetings, but we didn't have any direct active voice, except as what the librarian would put forth at faculty meetings. But, we were not really part of that part of the school governance until we got the equivalent rank.

MEYER: Then, are you saying that the library then did in fact have a representative in those days, in the Academic Council?

SPENCER: Oh yes, indeed. I was it for a time. Each major department chose a representative. We elected a representative for a two year or a three year span.

MEYER: That's right. In those first two months, when you came out here, were there any particular individuals that you remember that were really helpful to you personally?

SPENCER: Well, yes. The most helpful was Irving Goleman from the other campus. His wife worked on this campus, but they always took new people kind of under their wings, and introduced us to people in the community, and they were helpful in getting settled. Other than that, the library staff itself did not really associate much with each other. I mean, they all were older and had very separate existence.

There was no-not much of any kind of interaction with them. Then in the music library was Nona Dennis, whose husband John was on the Faculty at Delta. She was a charming woman, and we were great friends. In fact, we lived in John's house for a couple of years while he went on sabbatical. But the thing that struck me most about this school, it was sort of an extended family feeling. Tully Knoles was still very much in evidence. He was just, I think, Chancellor was his title. He didn't usually attend faculty meetings, but he was sort of the *eminence grise* that everyone was aware of; Burns was rather new as President. I think he'd only been president for four or five years when I came. The faculty meetings were sort of interesting. We held them in the building that is now I guess called the President's Lounge or something? It has a collective history-it started out as a Carnegie record collection place, then the YMCA or Y's had it, then part of the dining hall, and now it's a sort of a social gathering place for small groups.

MEYER: Yes, Anderson Hall.

SPENCER: Anderson Hall, yes.

MEYER: That-that went through, like you say, it went through-

SPENCER: -a lot of different -

MEYER: -jobs. It is now part of the Engineering complex.

SPENCER: Oh, is it? That's where we had the faculty meetings and it was interesting: Bob Winterberg, who was the Financial Vice President, would be there with his Black Book, that seemed to have all of the answers- and Bob would go through that and tell us what the story was. No one ever saw inside that Black Book, I think, but Bob. Robert Burns would propose a resolution, and then it was a choice of-who would quickly second it-it was usually Cobb or Jantzen. They would raise a hand immediately, you just would have to see which one got it!

MEYER: Repeat their names again.

SPENCER: Emerson Cobb and Marc Jantzen. He was the head of the School of Education, and Cobb was head of the Chemistry Department.

MEYER: That's right.

SPENCER: But they were the two big powers, faculty wise, here.

MEYER: That's interesting-

SPENCER: -and they, as you say, it was kind of a joke to see who would second the motion first, because it was all pretty cut and dry. I don't ever remember a solution being voted down in the entire time I was there. That was pretty much the governance by these administrators. It was only when the Academic Council was formed that the faculty, as a whole, was directly involved in these things. Before, it was a sort of a "big brother"-sort of thing: your problems were solved. They didn't-perhaps still don't-there was no formulated sick leave policy. If you were sick, someone just took your place there. The only thing spelled out was your vacation length of time. There was a certain amount of departmental rivalry of

course, because there always is, but it seemed to me that pretty much everyone got along, and the thing was, everybody knew everybody. The student body was small enough that I knew virtually all of them by sight and about 3/4 of them by name. And so it was a very interknit sort of place, you know. We were all together, and in it together, and shared. We went on faculty retreats once a year, up to Columbia. I think they were St. Patrick's Day or-it was some three day holiday, and we would all go up there, sometimes in the snow. There would be a topic and they would divide into groups and each group would talk about it-

MEYER: Yes. I remember I was going to ask you about those retreats because...President Burns had a cabin in Columbia-

SPENCER: Yes

MEYER: -and so then he was able to set up the meetings, and I think we met at the Fallon House-

SPENCER: Yes. Well, at the time, also, COP then, had a theater operation that-

MEYER: Yes!

SPENCER: -that the Drama Department here, all summer long, gave plays up there, and a group of students went up there, in what I guess was called the Eagle Cottage, adjacent-so there was a close connection with Columbia. This was before the state took it over, I believe-

MEYER: I think so too-

SPENCER: -and so there was a lot of connection between here and there. The-I remember the retreats mainly because of the snow sometimes, and the strange partners you got to room with. But it-it was, as I said, a very collegial sort of thing. Everyone seemed to get along. I was younger, so I don't know how much problems there were outside of that, but it seemed to me a very happy place to work. I thoroughly enjoyed it, and I never felt out of place, although I obviously was for a long time, until you came.

MEYER: Right!

SPENCER: You were the next young one that came. It was a period when the school was being quite opportunistic. I guess the GI bill was on its last leg, so they were really looking for students. So they went into food processing for a while, where they would train people to work in various tomato processing plants-you know, seeing how many bugs were in the samples. That was, until the people figured out it was cheaper to hire somebody off the street and train them to do it than to hire a college graduate to do it.

MEYER: Gee, I don't remember that-was that with the Chemistry Department?

SPENCER: No, it seems like...well, I'm not sure what its direct governance was, but a charming woman named Sofia Hitt ran it, and she hired students to work in it. There were various people to work in it, I did it for a while even. My friends were there, and so we peered through microscopes to count bugs in

little tomato samples, and weighed samples for them. It finally, I guess, died because a limited number of these people would be hired by these canneries-that was when the tomato processing business was a really big deal around here. I don't think it's so much so now. And then COP went into the Cluster Colleges, of course, and then the Engineering School and all of these others-Dentistry and Law-all of these were all added-were all added roughly the same time from I think the mid '60's after that. Before that, the student body, aside from returning veterans, which by that time-by the '50's-were pretty much done. It was a place where students were largely from the area, because it was a socially acceptable school. It was kind of the Northern California equivalent of Pomona and Occidental. It was where people could send their children to a nice co-educational school that looked like a campus. It was smaller than Stanford-and cheaper-so a lot-we had a lot of...not a lot, but a number of people who came from the Bay Area, who were very well connected, who came here.

MEYER: Yes. That's interesting that you mentioned that, because my early association was through the Conservatory, and that was very-

SPENCER: Oh yes that-it was the Conservatory and the athletic thing were the big draws other than that – the Conservatory was one of the 'oldest in the West' and had a sterling reputation and an excellent faculty, so it attracted a lot of people from all over, pretty much, but mainly from California. Well, my wife came from Wyoming.

MEYER: Right. She was originally a Conservatory student?

SPENCER: Yeah. Yeah. She was at Delta for two years then, when they took over Delta-you know I think before that at the end of the Delta two years, she transferred to University of the Pacific.

MEYER: Right. So, stop for a moment there. Could you speak, just a little bit, about the lower division, upper division situation?

SPENCER: Oh yeah. Well, during the war, there was such a shortage of students that COP eliminated the lower division and Delta took over these classes. I'm not sure in what year – I think it was probably, '42 or '43, maybe? As I said, there was interchange between the two; quite a few of the faculty were joined, but it had its own separate faculty, and a very strong one in some areas. In the English Department, a group of them all went up to San Francisco State [laughs], and they had Irving Goleman who was sort of an institution, and to tell you truth, they got "Golemanitis", they were all so impressed with him. He was sort of a Renaissance man, a charming guy with a broad background and huge charisma. I'm not sure what year COP reinstituted the lower division here. I would guess it was in the '70s, but I'm not at all sure when it did...

MEYER: I think it was earlier than that.

SPENCER: It was?

MEYER: I'm not sure.

SPENCER: It could have been. I just don't remember. They coexisted for quite awhile, and then Delta got its new campus built out there, and so they pulled up stakes, and so COP had to get back on its own because there was no way of commuting them back and forth. Later, or maybe immediately, purchased that campus and made it part of the UOP campus for several departments, moving over to there primarily.

MEYER: Yes, I remember that. Dates are not clear in my mind either, but my colleague that you mentioned, Libby Matson, said she came in '46, and just a little bit after that the faculty had a decision about which school they would work in.

SPENCER: Yeah. Yeah.

MEYER: Like Irving Goleman went the junior college way and other people stayed here. I think there were some jealousies and difficult times during that.

SPENCER: Oh yeah, for one thing, Delta paid a lot more and so -

MEYER: That's right.

SPENCER: So, they were sort of torn between their loyalties, and I think it ended to some degree on what they would be able to teach at Delta, whether their courses would all be junior college, you know, lower division type courses.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: They wouldn't have the same type of interesting classes to teach. I don't know really how many were joined. I think in some departments more and then some fewer. I knew a couple of teachers who were old, but then when they moved they had to make up their mind, and I think most came to UOP. Allan Laursen, the librarian, went to Delta, and so we got our first full-time librarian after that, after he left.

MEYER: Do you remember his name?

SPENCER: Oh yes! The first one was Jim Riddles.

MEYER: Jim was the very first-

SPENCER: Yeah. He was the first.

MEYER: After Allan?

SPENCER: Yeah, and for a number of years, and my recollection was he resigned and Arthur Swan took over. He had been on the staff already and was working in the Pharmacy Library, and he just took over and he went on until we got one that I try not to think about [laughs].

MEYER: [laughs] Backing up a bit, you mentioned about the Science Library so, were there branch libraries?

SPENCER: Yes. There were at least two major ones. The Science Library which was when the Pharmacy School started and built across the river; then they brought their collection and built up a pharmacy collection and took some of the other sciences over there, not all, but the bulk of the specialized books were over there across the river, and they had their own librarian.

MEYER: First a gal by the name of Iona or, they brought a librarian with them from Idaho?

SPENCER: Yes, I think so.

MEYER: From Idaho State.

SPENCER: Yes! After she retired – they were pretty independent, we really didn't have much to do with them. They did their own budget and their own book ordering. I don't know if they did their own cataloguing or not, but they were pretty much independent. The Music Library was the other one. I had specialized in music cataloguing and in music librarianship because I thought that was what I wanted to do as a senior in college, and after I graduated for awhile, I learned music cataloging, which was very specialized. When I went to Columbia I worked in the music library there too. So when I came here to the Music Library was over in quonset huts over there to the right of the gymnasium. That building housed the record collection which had started with the Carnegie set collection in here. That was the initial record collection, but then they kept buying. When I came, someone - I never who exactly who gave them a gift of two or three hundred records- and that was just sort of sitting there, and so I helped with the cataloguing of that, and we had a full time person, I told you, Nona Dennis. Then when I came here and I took over the cataloguing aspect of the records, and I had a student assistant who worked at that. The practice rooms were in that building as well as the listening rooms, and the office where the librarian was.

MEYER: Let's clear up the site of that building. We have the main gym, and then we had Owen Hall, then we had Bannister Hall

SPENCER: They were sort of permanent buildings, they were bricked over. They may still be there for all I know.

MEYER: They are!

SPENCER: They are. Then beyond that there were two Quonsets that were left over from WWII

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: There were two across the road that housed the Art Department.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: These two were largely all music. The band had a rehearsal room and they stored the band and orchestra music there, I believe.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: Then the listening and practice rooms and some music classrooms.-

MEYER: Right. So, there was assigned then someone from the library or from Conservatory that looked after the Music Library?

SPENCER: Mona Dennis was here when I came; I'm not sure who hired her.

MEYER: Uh-huh.

SPENCER: After I came that was directly under our supervision. After Nona left, we hired Alice Martin who took her place.

MEYER: Repeat her name again. The lady's name, again?

SPENCER: Nona Dennis was the first one. Then we had Alice Martin; she was here for a long, long, time; she was a violinist. She worked there for about, I think about 10 years.

MEYER: Oh, yes.

SPENCER: Then we hired another woman who was there, and then by that time I was about ready to retire, and so another woman who was now the vice president or something, what's her name?

MEYER: Who is she - still here?

SPENCER: Oh yes! She went from the Music Library to this Library, and she got all involved in the computer stuff, and so she became the computer person. I think she was an academic - not an academic vice president, but a-

MEYER: Jean Purnell, okay.

SPENCER: She was hired as a music librarian.

MEYER: Oh, is that right?

SPENCER: Yes. Against my better judgment in that I said, there is no need for a 'music librarian' -

MEYER: Uh-huh.

SPENCER: because there isn't. Records and scores were going to move over to this building, so there wasn't really any - that much to with them. The cataloguing things were all that was separated. It didn't seem really worthwhile to fund a position because there was no reference work, or really that kind of professional work connected with it, but then after we got the record collection done, I guess about that time was about the time I went to halftime the last couple years I was working here. I think that was about '82 was when all these changes were occurring.

MEYER: Back up again, too. We are sitting in the library and it was the second extension of the original building.

SPENCER: Yeah.

MEYER: Can you recall when the first addition came on board and whether you all as staff people had anything to do with the design, or what not?

SPENCER: Yeah. Yeah. We didn't have a lot to do with it. I think it must have been in about – well – I just don't remember now. I think probably in the '80s it was built or maybe in the late '70s. We were involved in the planning to a degree. We had quite a lot to say; we didn't have much to say about the décor which was frightful. Everything was in fuchsia and pink. The actual set up of the library, we were, when the 2nd addition was being planned – this one – we had absolutely nothing to do with it. They never talked to us about it at all.

MEYER: Is that right?

SPENCER: It was a professional who came in and said what it would be. I think none of us had really anything to do – we never really saw the plans. This one didn't get finished till '86 or something.

MEYER: Yeah, I want to say the mid-80s.

SPENCER: Yeah, it was not done when I left.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: I left when books were still important. Now, we're a communication center and books are secondary. So, I was here during the 'golden period,' when libraries were where people read books.

MEYER: Yes. Let me ask you about that technology movement, there?

SPENCER: Yeah.

MEYER: You retired in about 80-what?

SPENCER: '84.

MEYER: '84. So, are you saying that computers and computer positions as they are today were not in existence?

SPENCER: I don't think the library had a computer in '84. There may have been one somewhere that I wasn't aware of. We thought a Word Processor was pretty *far out*. No, there were still books then. The Google, I don't know had been invented or not at that point. [laughs]

MEYER: Uh-huh.

SPENCER: I hope it's a passing phase. [both laugh] No, this all came later with the new building.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: I think that was perhaps why we didn't have much input because we didn't bring along any real experience with what was needed with, you know, with listening booths and all of the things they have here. So, we weren't really involved that much.

MEYER: Do you remember that transition? I remember women's sports for instance, was in a transition. Do you remember in the early 80s or the late 70s that you could see something like this coming to be? Was there this transition?

SPENCER: No.

MEYER: Did it seem abrupt?

SPENCER: To me it was totally abrupt. I still don't accept it. No, it was not in foreseeable future as long as I was here. People did have their own computers. The library had none, I believe, before '84. I don't think there was anything here; maybe the order department may have had or the cataloguing may have had something because it made a huge difference in cataloguing because a library is dependent largely on the cataloguing center on the Library of Congress; they put out the periodic books of all the books that are copyright, and in it that's all the information you need. You know, pretty much the only things that the cataloger had to really worry about was something they had not done. They did a pretty good job. In music, on the other hand, they did a really bad job. Almost no records and things were done. That's why music cataloguing remains so difficult because you had no prototypes to follow; you started from scratch. I won't bring the tech out, but it's very complicated because every music thing has one accepted title regardless of language or anything else or how many people were playing it, so you had to establish that title. The other thing I remember about the late 50s and 60s, and this you know better than I do, we gathered a lot of high powered athletes because of the football program. That was the time of Eddie LeBaron, and so a lot of kids were coming, not a lot, but a number of students were coming who really academically were not what you might want, and a lot of them didn't major in Physical Education because they couldn't pass Kinesiology and Anatomy.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: They ended up in the Business Department which was pretty devastating for the Business Department because they had a lot of jocks there, who weren't that interested in it. Although, even then we had a pretty good record of getting people out with a degree in four years, unlike most schools, which dumped a lot of them. I think we did pretty well there, but still because of the academic levels and other things a lot of them did end up in the School of Business. It wasn't until they established a separate Business Department that really became a going part of the thing because they got new people in there and raised their standards a lot. I don't know where the football players went, well of course football was being deemphasized. They went somewhere else. Yeah, football was really a bad point with the faculty because of this fact of dealing with students who were not so well equipped and also the cost.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: Because we were in a league we didn't belong.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: And it was only after a couple of disasters when we were wiped out.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: They got rid of football.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: Of course you know more about that than I do. But, it was a kind of anchor dragging us down academically and financially.

MEYER: Let, me – yeah I remember the football situation. But, backing up, you mentioned way back when, a little bit about the Cluster Colleges and the innovations that took place during that time –the Cluster Colleges were so separate in many of their ways, but how did the library service those kinds of independent programs?

SPENCER: Well, just like all the other programs except those faculty who attempted to build up the Spanish Language collection in answer – because the book collection, as you know where the faculty basically asked for books and requested things. There was book selections on the part of University but, the basic collections were what the faculty wanted; they each had a library budget; I don't know how they handled it. Sometimes I think one member of the staff of the department handled it all. I handled all the music. I had the music budget and I bought the music. I talked and worked with the faculty, but in most cases it was the faculty and that was mainly – I don't think they established any 'in house' library, although there might have been a little Spanish collection we didn't know about. As far as we were concerned it was just another department.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: But, making more demands in certain areas that we attempted to fulfill.

MEYER: That's good. That clears that up, and so the same question goes on. As Pharmacy moved, as the Business school became a "business school," and the School of Education, was the library at that time servicing each of those? Although, you mentioned that Pharmacy had its own Science Library?

SPENCER: Yeah.

MEYER: What about other schools...?

SPENCER: No, the others were all centralized, except music because of the nature of the record collection and the scores and things. The books were in the Main Library. The music books were all here. That was why I felt a Music Library didn't work because the books and records and things were over there, and it was over there that they needed someone to service it, but there was no reference here for it. They were the only separate ones; music, the Pharmacy Library and the Reserve books were usually

at Owen Hall. The reserves were a move back over here when they built the Martin Library. They had to be in closed collection, and there was formerly a huge job each semester taking books off reserve and putting books on reserve and moving them to Owen Hall.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: You know hundreds of books had to be moved back and forth.

MEYER: Right. Let me ask you, you hesitated a bit back when you talked about the sequence of deans of the library. You mentioned that after Allen Laursen and then Jim Riddles and then Arthur Swan. Then who?

SPENCER: I have repressed his name. He was a second choice. He wasn't the one they originally wanted, and they couldn't get that person, so they got him. This man, he was not really an academician, he certainly was literary, but the main problem with him was his personality destroyed the staff. We finally had to have a series of meetings with the Vice President because it was virtually the staff against the administration. He didn't book any opposition to his ideas. He would present something and unless everyone was enthusiastic about it he was very unhappy. He was just hard to work with. We were united solidly against him.

MEYER: Yes, so the morale of it...

SPENCER: We didn't change, and he didn't change, so we were demoralized.

MEYER: That was it. It was morale that went really down.

SPENCER: We were united among ourselves more than we had been before. But, as far as with him, it was a very unfortunate thing. He finally left. He actually went to the Library of Congress or some sort of a job there.

MEYER: No, goodness!

SPENCER: Yeah. He was an African American. So, I think that was part of the thing they wanted, to get a racial balance.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: Because there were very few on the faculty.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: I think that was part of it, but anyway he was just really unfortunate; I couldn't quite deal with him. I just couldn't. He got an associate who started out fine, and then she became as difficult as he.

MEYER: That must have been difficult too.

SPENCER: She finally left too. At that time, I had planned to work till I was 65. That was my lifetime plan, and then I decided as a result of this that I wouldn't. I went on half-time to get used to having free time. To just divorce myself from a job that had been very energy and time consuming. It worked out very well! My wife did the same thing. It worked out very well. I got sort of a golden parachute; they put into my retirement, what I would have when I was 65. I didn't suffer a pension loss with the retirement program. I retired right when I was 60, and that was in 1984.

MEYER: That was great. Let me ask you about Special Collections?

SPENCER: I'm glad you mentioned that, I had forgotten. We had a Special Collection in the Martin Library; it was called the California History Collection. What were their names? Martin? No. Nope. It was a family, a man and his wife, were very interested in the collection -

MEYER: Stuarts!

SPENCER: Stuarts, yes of course! They were a charming couple. They had a person who spent or did the actual work in it, but they were here a lot of time. They devoted an enormous amount of energy and money into the collection. That was the start of the history collection. There wasn't an archival separate "Pacific History" collection. The library collected Pacificana and all the old yearbooks and catalogues. We didn't do anything with Pacific history as such. That was all a later thing. The California History collection had a few notable things, and then when they got the John Muir Papers, why that was a huge step forward, and was built from there. I don't know when Pacific archival collection started separately. It was after I left.

MEYER: You mean in the governance structure of the library there was not a "Special Collections" department until after the Stuarts? What was that? Who were they, again? What were they representing?

SPENCER: The California History Center. I believe it started in the mid-'60s. I think they just called it the California History Center. I think they had a separate budget that was entirely at their discretion, that's my feeling about it. I never really knew. We had nothing to do with the governance of it. Apart from opening the door. We didn't check out material or anything. That was all theirs. They had someone there who was responsible for it. I don't think they had any UOP archival material at all except as a cross reference. There was no library archives, except as what we maintained. We had all the old theses, yearbooks, and a few other things like that and memorabilia we called Pacificana. Almost nothing. There was a little room on the second floor that was a locked cage.

MEYER: So, when you left in '80...

SPENCER: '84.

MEYER: '84. There was not a department called "Special Collections".

SPENCER: No.

MEYER: Do you know when that came on board?

SPENCER: No, I don't.

MEYER: So, it must have been in the 90s or something?

SPENCER: Yeah, it must have been. I think the interest in the California Collection was building as a result of the Muir Papers. And a couple faculty members were very involved with it. I think the archival collection became sort of an offshoot of that. They took over a "Special Collection" kind of thing.

MEYER: Ron Limbaugh.

SPENCER: Ron, that's right! He was very interested in that. I think he was the one who really started this "Special Collections" idea with a separate budget and all. I think the Stuart collection, or the Stuart Room or whatever we called it had a separate budget which they controlled. We were never in the budget making. The other departments would compete for more money. The librarians actually set the budget up and so, I never – we never saw any figures. I knew how much money that the Music Department got, but I didn't know about the others.

MEYER: Back to the music, again. One of my earliest recollections of a very fine man and now his name escapes me of course. But, Lawton Harris-

SPENCER: Lawton had his own camp.

MEYER: Folk Dance.

SPENCER: Folk Dance, yes and that was a very separate thing. I don't think we had any connection with them. They had a camp, maybe still do?

MEYER: They do.

SPENCER: They do? It was going strong in '50, I believe, for two weeks or so in the summer. Great crowds of people would come and dance on the lawns, but it was a separate institution. They paid a fee and it probably was a self-supporting thing, but I never saw it as 'library-oriented'. I don't think we even stored music for them.

MEYER: Well, yes, because this very unique, and a very large folk dance record library became part of the music library.

SPENCER: Well, not while I was here.

MEYER: Not while you were here?

SPENCER: No. We never saw any of that. That was a later thing.

MEYER: That Folk Dance Camp is still going.

SPENCER: It's still going?

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: It was a big deal here in the summer.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: Incidentally you were talking about dancing on the lawn. The grounds were splendid, always, but they used to water by flooding the lawns. So, once a week there would be 8 or 9 inches of water only in the lawn areas with much skateboarding – surfing on top of them. Then they discovered that impacted the soil terribly and they cut that out and redid the lawns.

MEYER: Changing the subject to the old times that we're talking about and moving forward. Even though you left in the '80s, you are still part of the community and so not namely this narrow community, but the whole Stockton area. What's your recollection or what is your feeling about the evolution of the university? How it fits into the community?

SPENCER: It did not fit into the community for a long time. It was a separate little enclave here. The students were even recommended not to go downtown much, and they didn't. There was almost no interaction with the community, except the Conservatory programs were attended by interested people and the athletic events. I don't think there was any sort of outreach, except – well, there was in the fact that the education people put out teachers – student teachers into things. I don't know of any other department that did put out, students getting work experience one sort or another. There wasn't at the time real effort I think to incorporate. Of course we were isolated. There wasn't much north of Alpine. You know, you and I live out in Morada, and remember Hammer Lane at that time, daisies grew there. I think there were two painted stop signs between Highway 99 and Pacific, now there are like nineteen electric signs. There has been a huge shift, and Lincoln Center was just starting, and so we were geographically quite isolated from the bulk of town.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: I think that was a factor. We were just a little island here, sort of like Columbia in New York.

MEYER: Is that right?

SPENCER: I think there has been more of an effort in recent years to keep connected to the retired faculty. I don't know if there was an Emeritus Association when I left. There may have been, well yes there was – I think.

MEYER: 1988, it officially started.

SPENCER: 1988. There wasn't even one. They had a retirement dinner but I wasn't invited to mine, actually, because I left in December and mine was in June. I didn't even get a Faculty Bulletin for years; it was as if I'd never existed. I did have a library card I could use. It's only been in the last 10 – 15 years there has been a far more active effort to keep the old faculty and keep the alums. June graduated from the Conservatory and had a Master's Degree here, and she never heard anything much really. It's only

with the new dean that they've really been active. He has a wonderful thing now; once a year or so they have a group of alums come and eat at a restaurant with scholarship students at the various tables, and afterwards everyone comes to a concert which is really nice. I started to get the Faculty Bulletin, in fact we got two copies for a while – and now the Alumni Bulletin. There was always an Alumni Association, but the faculty was not actively involved in that, unless they chose to do it, but the Emeritus thing, why there is a group who still have an active interest. I think it's a great thing.

MEYER: What about the perception of the University in the eyes of Stocktonians?

SPENCER: I think they've always felt very proud of it. You know, one of the few claims to fame that Stockton had. I don't think they really ever felt a part of it much. It was very expensive. It's always been very expensive – beyond the reach of most of the population of Stockton.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: It was isolated and enclosed. I think they were aware of the football teams and things. That was one of the few good things about football: it got publicity. I don't know how much the perception has changed because the people I know best are the people who have always been aware of this school. The newspaper has always been supportive of UOP. In fact the Martin Library was built with a great gift of funds from the Martins who were the publishers of the Stockton Record.

MEYER: Oh, is that right?

SPENCER: Irving Martin was the publisher. That family owned it for years and years till I think in – it must have been in the 70s or 80s, that someone bought it out.

MEYER: Gannett Company, or something like that.

SPENCER: The Martins had always been supportive, and I don't know how much money they gave, but they named the building after them.

MEYER: Is that right?

SPENCER: Yeah.

MEYER: The Martin Library -

SPENCER: Yeah, it was the Irving Martin Library at one time, I think. Maybe, it's still on the wall, but I don't know.

MEYER: Now, it's Holt-Atherton, is it not?

SPENCER: I don't know what it's called. [both laugh] They change the names of these building here so fast I'm never sure where anything is. The traffic pattern and the building names are in constant flux!

MEYER: Well, we've covered a lot of things.

SPENCER: Oh, I know one thing I was going to mention.

MEYER: Yeah?

SPENCER: When I came the student conduct rules were very rigorous.

MEYER: Oh yeah.

SPENCER: Girls couldn't wear sports shorts except going to an athletic event. I think they couldn't wear slacks to class or anything. Smoking was really prohibited except in a few narrow spots outside. One of them was outside the old library, a little alleyway with a chipmunk cage in it. Drinking was not only frowned on, I mean the obvious legality of it. The faculty was even asked if they drank before they were hired.

MEYER: I was too.

SPENCER: One librarian had a daughter in school, and she was told not to drink in front of any of her daughter's friends who came – she was not to drink in front of them. There were very few divorces among the faculty then. It wasn't until Raymond came when all sorts of things started happening with faculty marrying students and all that, but before that the faculty was pretty staid. The faculty were mostly married and stayed married.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: It was not a Puritanical sort of thing, but the Methodist connection was very strong, and I think it was finally severed largely because a number of government grants couldn't be given to religious connected school. I think that was when we really 'legally' severed the tie, but there's still I think the chaplain and the religious tradition in the church over there – the chapel – has always been Methodist. I think most people who taught religious education were Methodists even after that, I don't know that now. At the time they were all Methodist.

MEYER: Yeah. I think the chaplains that have been our most recent have used titles like "Interfaith Counselor" and tried to be more inclusive.

SPENCER: There were never a lot of religious or racial problems on campus. There were a few foreign students who were Muslims I know, who came here, and some Pakistani students who were in the Pharmacy School. I never heard any problems, and we had a very few African American students, and not too many Hispanic ones, till when they started the giving scholarships. I remember there was a program for giving scholarships to local students.

MEYER: CIP.

SPENCER: Yeah.

MEYER: Community Involvement Program.

SPENCER: Yes, there were a number then. There were always orientals and some Hawaiian families who sent all their kids here. They were charming people, but incidentally another thing was with all the period of unrest in the 60s when Cal was erupting, I think there was one demonstration here one day around the Burns Tower in that area. It was a short-lived little demonstration.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: The students were not all that political, I don't think.

MEYER: No.

SPENCER: They were all pretty conservative. I don't know what their political representation was, but I expect a lot of them were Republicans.

MEYER: Sure, I think so.

SPENCER: Still are probably, but there were not the sort of causes on campus; at least I was not aware of them.

MEYER: A number of the oral histories speak to that time, and many give credit to Bob Burns who at that time seemed to be able to put salve on wounds that were of something erupting.

SPENCER: Yeah, he was very good as a president! He said the right things and did the right things, and his wife was charming. He was ideal for the time. He was young enough to be interested in new things, and as he matured he met most of the challenges. I think the only thing and this is not a criticism really – he tended to be kind of opportunistic, you know.

MEYER: Uh-huh.

SPENCER: They kept trying to find niches to fill, and that's of course what a president's supposed to do.

MEYER: Sure.

SPENCER: Some of them were sort of faded, and ran their course, like the Cluster Colleges and the food processors.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: There were never really any scandals that I can remember. Somebody was shot once, I never knew if it was fatal or not.

MEYER: There was something about a freshman and then-

SPENCER: His boyfriend came and shot her, and I think it was fatal but I'm not certain.

MEYER: Yes, that's true.

SPENCER: I guess life here was really a sort of a smooth thing.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: You know? Life just went on.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: It was a pleasant place to work and go to school. It was then, and I think still is, a place where the faculty is really interested in the students. If a student seeks it, they will get all kinds of help to get through. I've known of several, and a couple I even tutored, that this was a big thing with them. The classes were small, and they were taught by professors instead of T.A.s, and they could get help.

MEYER: Yes, I think that they use the word "student-centered" these days, but it's still the same thing.

SPENCER: Of course there was also the fact that research was not a crucial factor for the faculty. You know in most schools, if you don't publish, you perish!

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: Here, their interests were with their teaching rather than their research. I think there was some research being done in some of the Chemistry departments and Pharmacy, certainly.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: Basically, in COP it was not a big thing. Someone did it because it was their choice, but it wasn't a factor, I don't think. At the time it wasn't required to have a PhD. I guess now it pretty much is generally -

MEYER: I think it is now.

SPENCER: I don't know whether there are exceptions for artists at the Conservatory or not.

MEYER: Yeah.

SPENCER: I came here with the idea of working on a PhD, and then I thought for the next twenty years I will not have a free moment, and I will always think I should be doing something, and it wouldn't be that advantageous to me and my career to do it. I gave up.

MEYER: I was exactly the same.

SPENCER: Yeah?

MEYER: I was hired without it and just with a Master's, and but at the time too, I think we both had felt that this was an entire echelon thing that just few people could move toward.

SPENCER: Yeah.

MEYER: I always thought that if I could do what I'm doing and enjoy it, well -

SPENCER: The PhD's were not that thick.

MEYER: No.

SPENCER: A number of people got them after they came here.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: There were rules and practices in place in order to get tenure then. If you were an Assistant you had to become an Associate within a given period. I think that is still kind of a rule, that if you aren't going to be promoted after an 'x' amount of years, pretty much you aren't asked back. I know there have been some here who have not been asked back for one reason or another.

MEYER: Right.

SPENCER: I think it was largely by mutual consent who left during much of the time I was here, whether they got a better job somewhere else or whatever. There was very little faculty turnover. You know.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: There were lots of additions of course with the Cluster Colleges, but of the core people who were in COP, there wasn't really that much turnover.

MEYER: Well, can you think of anything I could have asked? We look like we covered, I think a lot.

SPENCER: I think that pretty much were all the things I could think of that I could make a contribution about.

MEYER: Right. Well, certainly the contribution about your recollections of the library. The oral history collection has nothing at this point other than we have talked about today in the time that you actually served the university.

SPENCER: Well, the library collection was always good. It was always adequate for the curriculum. There were a few people who had special interests on the faculty, so you would want to buy more books in that area.

MEYER: Yes.

SPENCER: But, they – we never had much complaints, you know, having the kind of books they wanted, and of course they were picking the books, so if they didn't then it was their fault. The students used the library a lot. The fines were only 10 cents a day, but some of them – you know – had enormous fines. I was always appalled by some of these kids that pay 50 or 60 dollars without batting an eye sometimes. To me that was an awful lot of money.

MEYER: Oh my goodness!

SPENCER: A lot of students' families had a different standard of living. In fact, one of the students had a Ferrari – remember him?

MEYER: No. [laughs]

SPENCER: Yeah, he was a foreign student, and he had this Ferrari that he parked here.

MEYER: Well, Sherman Spencer, thank you very much for spending the time this afternoon and sharing your thoughts about the good ole' days.

SPENCER: Yes they were! I have nothing but fond recollections up to the last two years I was here.

MEYER: Okay, this is it for today, and thank you!